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New York

President:	Sir Jeremy Greenstock	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Petrella
	Bahrain	Mr. Buallay
	Brazil	Mr. Fonseca
	Canada	Mr. Fowler
	China	Mr. Qin Huasun
	France	Mr. Doutriaux
	Gabon	Mr. Dangue Réwaka
	Gambia	Mr. Jagne
	Malaysia	Mr. Hasmy
	Namibia	Mrs. Ashipala-Musavyi
	Netherlands	Mr. van Walsum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Slovenia	Mr. Benedejčič
	United States of America	Ms. Soderberg

Agenda

The situation in Sierra Leone

First report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) (S/1999/1223)

99-86688 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Sierra Leone

First report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) (S/1999/1223)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Sierra Leone in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Kamara (Sierra Leone) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Bernard Miyet, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Miyet to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the first report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), document S/1999/1223.

I now give the floor to the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Bernard Miyet.

Mr. Miyet: At your request, I should like to introduce to the members of the Security Council the first report on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), which is contained in document S/1999/1223 and which was issued on 6 December this year. I should also like to update the Council on relevant developments that have occurred since the preparation of the report.

As described in the report, progress has undoubtedly been made in the implementation Lomé Peace Agreement of 7 July 1999. On the political level, a Government of National Unity, comprising members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), was sworn in on 2 November.

The rebels are now part of the Government and share in the responsibility for moving the country forward on the road to peace, reconciliation and development.

Another positive development is the registration of the RUF as a political party on 22 November, now called the Revolutionary United Front Party (RUFP). However, the party still has to adopt its statutes and set up office. It is hoped that the RUF will give priority to transforming its military structures into a purely political party. Such efforts would be deserving of support and encouragement by the international community.

After a long delay, the RUF and the AFRC have now also appointed their representatives to the Joint Monitoring Commission (JMC) and the Ceasefire Monitoring Commission (CMC). The first joint meeting of the JMC and the CMC was held on 7 December.

I would like now to turn to the programme of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. That programme, which is supported by the British Department for International Development (DFID) and the World Bank, is now picking up steam. It is hoped that this momentum can be maintained. The Secretary-General has been in touch with the President of the World Bank, Mr. Wolfensohn, to discuss means to improve the interaction between the World Bank, UNAMSIL and other stakeholders on the ground.

As a result of public appeals by Mr. Foday Sankoh, a significant number of ex-RUF combatants have come forward to join the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. Similarly, on 1 December,

after an appeal by Mr. Johnny Paul Koroma, 158 ex-Sierra Leone Army combatants, including 77 child soldiers, reported for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in the Occra Hills area. Last week, Koroma visited Kabala and encouraged the AFRC fighters there to lay down their arms. This week, Mr. Sankoh did the same in Fadugu. But we have to note that despite these appeals, the response up to now has been very slow. To summarize, almost 5,000, or over 10 per cent of an estimated 45,000 combatants, are now taking part in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. However, the various armed groups have yet to provide detailed information on the strength of their military forces.

At the same time, the disarmament process is difficult and will require a concerted effort as well as vigilance by all involved. The estimated large numbers of ex-combatants and the complex nature of the programme's management require continuous and close coordination between the Government and the various national and international actors to ensure that the programme can be implemented promptly and without any disruptions to stability in the country. The United Nations stands ready to assume its role in this regard. UNAMSIL has been instructed to assist the Government of Sierra Leone in preparing plans for the destruction of weapons surrendered by ex-combatants.

After a period of unrest, the situation in the Lungi and Port Loko disarmament camps is now relatively quiet. In the last few days, the National Commission for the disarmament process has disbursed about $25 to each of 500 ex-combatants in the Lungi camp. This money is supposed to address some of the immediate needs of ex-combatants. On 6 December, a "pre-discharge orientation" programme began in the Lungi camp and was received enthusiastically by the ex-combatants. In this regard, it would be important to find ways and means of keeping the period of encampment as short as possible and to expedite the preparations for the reintegration of ex-combatants.

(*spoke in French*)

I should now like to turn to some causes for concern which still remain. The Secretary-General in his report has described a number of causes of concern for the future. The security situation in the country remains volatile, although in recent days the situation has seemed to stabilize somewhat. In early October, the RUF moved several hundred fighters from Kailahun to Makeni, which had been under joint RUF/AFRC control. The town was subsequently attacked and taken over by the RUF. Fighting between the RUF and AFRC also took place around Lunsar and Rogberi. In addition, there were reports of frequent attacks by armed groups on villages and roads throughout the country. In particular, attacks in the area of Kimbia reportedly caused up to 1,000 persons to flee into Guinea.

Another source of concern relates to Mr. Sam Bockarie, one of the RUF commanders in the eastern part of the country, who has made several public statements that could give rise to some doubt as to the strength of his commitment to the peace process. Efforts are now being undertaken by the Government, the RUF leadership and UNAMSIL to provide him with the necessary clarifications about the Lomé Peace Agreement and the disarmament programme.

More recent sources of concern were several public statements made in the last day or two by Mr. Foday Sankoh himself in connection with the arrival of United Nations troops and their role in the disarmament process.

Lastly, since it is reported today in the press, I should like to inform the Council that two doctors from the non-governmental organization Doctors Without Borders have been detained in the Kailahun region. Mr. Bockarie has voiced his dissatisfaction over the disarmament process under way. Efforts are now being made on the ground by the Government and United Nations representatives in order to achieve the speedy release of the two doctors, and perhaps it might be desirable for the Council itself to voice the need for their release.

Another source of concern for the entire United Nations family, for non-governmental organizations and for Governments is the human rights situation, with too-frequent occurrences of rape, looting and harassment of and attacks on civilians. Furthermore, both the RUF and the AFRC have to date shown great reluctance to release adult and child abductees. Only some 1,000 adults and children have been released so far. Considerable numbers of civilians are still in captivity, and there are reports of continuing abductions. UNAMSIL issued a strong appeal to the parties to take immediate action to end the abuses, the human rights violations and the attacks against civilians. We also continue to urge Government authorities and ECOMOG to protect the civilian population to the extent possible, and wherever possible. In this regard, it should be recalled that a Ghanaian ECOMOG soldier was injured recently when his unit

took part in the defence of a village against an attack by a rebel group at Pepel island, 20 kilometres east of Lungi.

Still with reference to human rights, the Human Rights Commission and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission envisaged in the Lomé Agreement have yet to be established. As described in the Secretary-General's report, UNAMSIL and the Government of Sierra Leone are working closely with the office of Mrs. Mary Robinson, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to prepare the ground for the establishment of these two important commissions.

My final point relating to the various sources of concern is that the humanitarian crisis in Sierra Leone continues: the delivery of humanitarian assistance has been seriously hampered by the outbreaks of violence in various places. Assistance efforts by the humanitarian agencies continue to be obstructed by a variety of threats and by the procedures that must be carried out *vis-à-vis* various groups in order to gain access to many areas. These procedures are arbitrary and at this point there is no automatic access for non-governmental organizations. In addition, some national and international humanitarian personnel and experts continue to suffer harassment, assault and even at times detention at the hands of the rebel forces. The Lomé Peace Agreement clearly commits all former parties to the conflict to providing safe and unhindered access for humanitarian interventions. Clearly it is important that this access be given without further delay; this would also send a message to the Security Council.

I turn now to the question of the deployment of UNAMSIL. Since the preparation of the report, significant progress has been made with regard to the deployment of the military component of UNAMSIL. Nevertheless, efforts continue, in close coordination with the contributing States involved — to which I take this opportunity to convey my gratitude — to expedite the deployment so that the component can begin its work very soon.

The Force Commander, Major-General Jetley of India, arrived in Freetown on 7 December. The Force Headquarters, including logistic, administrative and security elements, all provided by India, have also arrived this week. The Indian battalion and rapid reaction force, comprising some 1,200 troops, will be arriving in three batches in the course of this month, and the deployment of this Indian contingent should be completed by the end of the year or by early January 2000. Over half of the Kenyan battalion is already on the ground, and their deployment should be completed by this weekend.

As members of the Council are aware, the Secretary-General has approached several Governments now contributing troops to ECOMOG with a view to securing their participation in UNAMSIL. In this regard, the battalion from Ghana, already on the ground as part of ECOMOG, will be reinforced to meet United Nations specifications and, pending the final necessary administrative arrangements, will be brought under United Nations command by the end of this month.

Since October, the Secretariat has also been engaged in intensive discussions with the Government of Nigeria and with other ECOWAS countries, including the Gambia and Guinea, in order to expedite the deployment of their military personnel. After the necessary information on important logistical details that the Secretariat received from the Nigerian authorities late last week, we hope that 2,000 fresh troops and 50 military observers from countries with which we have been in consultation can be brought in before the end of the year.

It is therefore important, as members of the Council are aware, that ECOMOG continues to play a major role in providing security at Lungi and at Freetown as well as in assisting the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, as envisaged in the Lomé Agreement. The Secretary-General has continued to be in touch with regional leaders, in particular President Obasanjo of Nigeria, to emphasize the importance that ECOMOG maintain in Sierra Leone a credible force of several thousand troops so that the process can proceed under the best possible conditions.

The Secretary-General warmly thanks ECOMOG and the contributing countries for their continued efforts and for the sacrifices they have made to support the Government and people of Sierra Leone. The Secretary-General also renews his appeal to donor countries to provide ECOMOG, in a way that consolidates its presence, with the support needed during the coming phase of its operations to effectively perform the tasks assigned to it.

(*spoke in English*)

I would like to conclude by saying that in spite of several serious concerns which I have outlined just now, we believe that there is perhaps also cause for some cautious optimism. It is clear that the commitments of the parties to the Lomé Agreement will be put to the test in the coming crucial period. Now that the main mechanisms for ceasefire monitoring and disarmament

are almost in place, the responsibility for advancing the peace process in Sierra Leone and keeping the momentum in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process rests with the parties, in particular the rebels. The United Nations, in close cooperation with ECOMOG, stands ready to do its part.

Mr. van Walsum (Netherlands): The Secretary-General's first report on United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and Under-Secretary-General Miyet's supplementary briefing contain some positive elements but also give cause for deep concern. It is probably a coincidence that Mr. Miyet gave us all the good news in English and all the bad news in French.

Although important progress has been made in the implementation of parts of the Lomé Peace Agreement and the deployment of UNAMSIL is well under way, the overall situation on the ground does not bode well for lasting peace in Sierra Leone. Violent incidents, ceasefire violations and human rights abuses have been reported with increasing frequency over the past two months. The neutrality and impartiality of humanitarian relief have not been respected. Humanitarian access has been impeded by the deteriorating security situation. Disarmament has been proceeding at too slow a pace.

It is becoming more and more difficult to describe these occurrences as isolated incidents. We call upon all rebel leaders to demonstrate their genuine commitment to the peace process in all its details. Only then can the promise of peace held out in the Lomé Agreement be made a reality.

First, all actions by rebels and their leaders as here described must cease right away. The Secretary-General rightly states in paragraph 34 of his report:

> "The continued violence against the people of Sierra Leone and international personnel is unacceptable and perpetrators should expect to be held accountable for their actions."

It must be made clear to the rebels and their leaders that the amnesty of the Lomé Peace Agreement does not extend to atrocities committed after the signing of the accord.

Second, rebel leaders must continue to call upon their fighters to disband and lay down their arms. The report indicates once again that all parties must give absolute priority to the disarmament activities. The participation of 5,000 ex-combatants is a step in the right direction, but it still leaves an estimated 40,000 of their colleagues outside the programme.

As for the question of funding, we are glad to see that a number of donor countries have made contributions to the World Bank Trust Fund set up to cover the costs of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. The Netherlands is finalizing arrangements for a contribution of $1.5 million to this fund.

In paragraph 26 of resolution 1270 (1999), the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to provide it with "updates ... on the continued level of deployment of ECOMOG personnel". We share the Secretary-General's hope that ECOMOG will continue to play its critical role in Sierra Leone as envisaged in the Lomé Agreement. In this connection, we commend Nigeria and other troop contributing countries for their vital contributions. In reaction to the Secretary-General's urgent appeal to donors contained in paragraph 36 of his report, we wish to remind the participants in the forthcoming ECOWAS Ministerial Meeting that the Netherlands is prepared once again to extend $8.2 million in additional budget support to the Republic of Mali so as to enable this country to contribute to ECOMOG's vital mission in Sierra Leone.

We acknowledge that the primary focus at this moment should be on disarmament and the deployment of United Nations and ECOMOG personnel, but we emphasize once more that the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission must start as soon as possible. We hope that in his next report the Secretary-General will be able to report more progress on this aspect, as well as on the outcome of the study on the nexus between the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a possible international commission of inquiry into human rights violations.

In closing, I wish to pay tribute to the outgoing Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Sierra Leone, Ambassador Okelo, and welcome Ambassador Adeniji as his successor.

Mr. Petrella (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this briefing. We believe this format marks a positive step towards greater transparency and openness in the work of the Council, particularly when high-ranking members of the Secretariat, as in the case of Ambassador Miyet today, deliver reports to the Council on important issues on our agenda.

The comprehensive report that the Secretary-General has submitted to us, as complemented today by the remarks of Under-Secretary-General Miyet, shows that the political, security and humanitarian situation in Sierra Leone is fragile and increasingly precarious. The example of some statements made to the media by Mr. Sankoh as to the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and by Mr. Sam Bockarie to the effect that his troops would not be disarming before Nigerian troops in Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) or in UNAMSIL — these are frankly alarming and must be rejected. That is why we reiterate that it is important to have UNAMSIL on the ground and to have it deployed as quickly as possible; and ECOMOG's continued presence is just as important.

We are encouraged by the comments made by Under-Secretary-General Miyet that subsequent to the Secretary-General's report the deployment by UNAMSIL has got under way without difficulty. We should congratulate the countries that have contributed military personnel for this difficult task.

The unequivocal backing of the Security Council for the Lomé Agreement is also very important, as are all the efforts made by President Kabbah to strengthen the democratic institutions in Sierra Leone.

With regard to the content of the report of the Secretary-General, in particular paragraph 34, and the comments that Under-Secretary-General Miyet has made, we would like to reiterate our particular concern about the attacks against United Nations and humanitarian personnel. In this context, we wish to reiterate the importance of the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, and we urge countries to ratify it.

In our view, everyone who is active in the territory is responsible for the security of such personnel. At the same time, we must seek ways of making sure that personnel of non-governmental organizations and humanitarian agencies receive the protection they need. With all due respect to the relevant countries and without wishing to interfere in their sovereign decisions, it seems to us that all Governments receiving United Nations personnel in their territories should become parties to the aforementioned Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel.

On another matter, I would like to endorse what has just been said by the Ambassador of the Netherlands to the effect that the amnesty envisaged in the Lomé Agreement should not be extended to cover atrocities committed subsequent to that Agreement.

Allow me in conclusion to congratulate Ambassador Okelo on a job very well done and to welcome the new Special Representative, Ambassador Adeniji of Nigeria, who so effectively discharged his duties in the Central African Republic.

Mr. Dangue Réwaka (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Gabon has carefully studied the Secretary-General's report on the evolution of the situation in Sierra Leone. It has also listened most carefully to the complementary presentation Under-Secretary-General Bernard Miyet has just made to the Council.

Like the Secretary-General, we welcome the progress made in the implementation of the Lomé Agreement, including, *inter alia*, the return to Sierra Leone of the leaders of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), as well as the establishment of a Government of National Unity and the recent increase in the number of former combatants that have joined the programme of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

Nonetheless, it is regrettable to have to note that recently some parties have yet again resumed the hostilities, casting doubt on their genuine willingness to contribute positively to the restoration of peace and the rebuilding of the country.

The delegation of Gabon condemns the continued acts of aggression against civilians, international civil servants and humanitarian personnel committed by the former rebel elements. We therefore call on all those who have yet to lay down their arms and who are behind the resurgence of violence to stop fighting immediately so as to facilitate the distribution of humanitarian aid and the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme now under way, as well as the other tasks envisaged under the Lomé Agreement. By the same token, it would be desirable for the rebel leaders to undertake an information campaign among their fighters to make them aware of the terms of the DDR programme. Such a campaign might encourage them to participate in the programme. Now is also the time to accelerate the full deployment of the 6,000 United Nations Blue Helmets envisaged under resolution 1270 (1999).

We take this opportunity to thank those countries that have already provided or pledged to provide troop contingents or financial and logistical contributions. We cannot praise enough the work of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), which has allowed the restoration of peace in Sierra Leone.

The success of the peacekeeping operation in Sierra Leone clearly depends on the firm will of the people of Sierra Leone to respect the commitments they made under the Lomé Agreement. It also depends on the continuation of the assistance of the international community.

We thank Mr. Okelo for the efforts that he has made, which have made it possible to achieve the results that we have seen, and we encourage the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General to continue this work so as to allow the Government and the people of Sierra Leone to again enjoy concord and national unity.

Mr. Fowler (Canada): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this meeting in this format. We join others who have already spoken in welcoming the Secretary-General's appointment of his new Special Representative in Sierra Leone, Mr. Adeniji, under whose direction we had the privilege of working in Bangui. We also join others in thanking Mr. Okelo for his efforts to restore peace in Sierra Leone.

The first troops of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) arrived in Sierra Leone only two weeks ago. We very much hope that the deployment of the civilian component of UNAMSIL will keep pace with that of the military contingent, for we believe this is vital in order to ensure that the implementation of the rehabilitation programme proceeds smoothly and rapidly.

We welcome the establishment of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) as a political party and expect Foday Sankoh to participate fully and constructively in the Government of National Unity. Mr. Sankoh should, we believe, present early proposals for the operations of the Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development, just as Johnny Paul Koroma has done for the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace.

Although progress has been made in the implementation of the Lomé Agreement, we remain deeply concerned at continuing evidence of the fragility of the peace process in Sierra Leone. Clashes between former elements of the RUF and of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), continuing troop movements and attacks on the personnel of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) — all of these represent serious breaches of the ceasefire agreement. This Organization, individually and collectively, must continue to remind all former rebel leaders of the importance of abiding by both the spirit and the letter of the Lomé Agreement.

We are deeply concerned by attacks and harassment by rebel elements directed at humanitarian personnel. The kidnapping this week of two representatives of Médecins sans Frontières is a bitter reminder of the dangers humanitarian workers still face in Sierra Leone. All parties to the Lomé accord are obliged to allow safe and unhindered access to all humanitarian personnel. As a result of prevailing insecurity, especially in the northern and eastern sections of the country, the delivery of much-needed humanitarian assistance remains extremely difficult. Mr. Sankoh and Mr. Koroma should take action to ensure that their commitments to the relevant provisions of the Lomé accord are translated into effective action. We expect that the deployment of UNAMSIL ought to facilitate greater access for humanitarian organizations and under safer conditions.

With reference to the safety of humanitarian personnel, and of course in order to enhance the security of the people of Sierra Leone and the prospect that they might soon be allowed a fair measure of stability and to resume their normal economic activity, I would ask Mr. Miyet if he could let us know to what extent the presence of anti-personnel landmines is hampering United Nations and other humanitarian work in the country.

The deteriorating human rights situation in Sierra Leone is indeed troubling. As just noted by Ambassadors Van Walsum and Petrella, while Canada supports the establishment of the Human Rights and Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, would-be human rights violators are warned that the amnesty provided for in the Lomé accord applies only to events which took place prior to 7 July 1999. Those who violate humanitarian law after that date should be brought to justice. The initiative to study the nexus between the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a possible international inquiry into past human rights violations is, in this context, most welcome.

Canada deplores the continued acts of violence and intimidation perpetrated by rebel elements against the

civilian population. The deployment of UNAMSIL elements to all areas of the country ought to provide civilians with a measure of protection from these continuing depredations. Rebel elements should be reminded that, in addition to the important role played by ECOMOG in ensuring the security of the population, UNAMSIL also has a robust mandate to take necessary action to protect civilians under immediate threat.

To date, the pace of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme has been disappointing, with only 10 per cent of ex-combatants currently registered and a few serviceable weapons collected. We are, however, encouraged by the recent increase in the number of ex-combatants entering the programme. Foday Sankoh and Johnny Paul Koroma should take further action to encourage their troops to participate fully in the process.

In conclusion, Canada hopes the international community will be attentive to the Secretary-General's call for further support.

Mr. Granovsky (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We agree with the conclusions and observations contained in the Secretary-General's first progress report prepared since the establishment of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone. We are pleased that, during this period, significant progress has been made towards implementing the Lomé Peace Agreement. At the same time — as made clear in the Secretary-General's report and the briefing by Under-Secretary-General Miyet — the overall situation in the country remains unstable. There have been serious human rights and ceasefire violations and the humanitarian crisis continues unabated. In this connection, the effective presence of the units of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group must be maintained.

We fully endorse that position and agree with the Secretary-General's main conclusions that the key to a settlement in Sierra Leone lies primarily in the parties' commitment to the Lomé Agreement and in particular to the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. We are convinced that steps taken by the people of Sierra Leone to that end will be unfailingly supported by the international community.

In conclusion, I should like to join in the expressions of appreciation to the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Okelo, and to wish the new Special Representative, Mr. Adeniji, success in his work.

Mr. Doutriaux (France) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset to thank Under-Secretary-General Miyet for his oral briefing and the Secretary-General for his report.

Our country fully supports the implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement and calls on all parties, particularly the rebels, scrupulously to respect its provisions, including the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In this respect, France welcomes the establishment by President Kabbah of the new Government of National Unity in October.

However, like most delegations that have spoken before us, France deplores and condemns the ceasefire violations that have occurred since July and the numerous ongoing human rights violations. I would cite the hostage-taking recently committed by certain rebel leaders and members of the former junta, in particular the abduction of humanitarian personnel working for Médecins sans Frontières. France calls on the rebel movements to facilitate the unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance to all regions of the country and to ensure the security of the personnel of humanitarian agencies.

We welcome the launching of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme and call on all parties to hasten its implementation. We stress the importance of financial support for this programme.

France welcomes the deployment of the first units of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and again thanks the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) for its critical role in providing security nationwide and in facilitating the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme.

We would emphasize the importance and urgency of providing humanitarian assistance to Sierra Leone. I call Council members' attention to the fact that France recently contributed 1 million francs to the World Food Programme to benefit Sierra Leone.

I wish to address a few questions to the representative of the Secretariat. The first concerns the deployment of UNAMSIL, as reflected in the map annexed to the Secretary-General's report. We note that the Mission has been largely deployed in the southern part of the country along a line between Lungi and Daru, which quite naturally covers the positions held by ECOMOG. What are the Secretariat's intentions as to

deployment in the northern part of the country? Have security guarantees for UNAMSIL troops to be deployed there already been negotiated with the rebel movements active in those regions?

Secondly, with respect to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, the report emphasizes that doubts remain with regard to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) commitment to the programme. How does the Secretariat assess the nature of these doubts? Is it simply concerned that the RUF will raise the stakes? Is there a problem of command within the divided rebel movement or, more seriously, a fundamental refusal to implement the Lomé Agreement and, in the final analysis, to relinquish control of the diamond-producing regions?

Finally, in paragraph 5 of his report, the Secretary-General notes that Mr. Koroma, the Chairman of the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace, has already presented his views concerning the organization of work of his Commission. Do these plans truly reflect the wishes of all the parties in Sierra Leone and have they been discussed with the United Nations?

Mr. Jagne (Gambia): Mr. President, first of all my delegation would like to commend you for arranging this open briefing on the situation in Sierra Leone. We are also grateful to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report and to Mr. Bernard Miyet for the update.

It is gratifying to note that progress has been made, notably the participation of the rebels in the Government and the registration of the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUF) as a political party. Similarly, in the vital area of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), although the response of the ex-combatants appears timid and slow, there is reason to believe that with the continued support of the donor community the programme will gather momentum. We are delighted to learn that some child soldiers have reported to the DDR programme. This is very encouraging indeed. As Mr. Miyet has rightly pointed out, this is an ongoing process and we need to monitor it closely.

At this juncture, my delegation would like to place on record its appreciation for the support given to the DDR programme by a number of Governments led by the United Kingdom in collaboration with the World Bank.

Au revers de la medaille — on the flip side of the coin, as the French saying goes — my delegation is perturbed by the poor human rights situation that continues to prevail in the country. Both RUF and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) are still holding adults and children in captivity. It is difficult to understand how leaders of RUF and AFRC are part of the Government and yet their followers continue to wreak havoc around the country. It is our fervent hope, however, that with the full deployment of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), the overall security situation would be improved tremendously and we urge the Secretariat to accelerate the process.

As far as the Gambia military observers are concerned, we are ready to deploy as soon as we are given the green light by the Secretariat. However, we have a question for Mr. Miyet concerning possible civilian police for Sierra Leone. We understand that there are 6 police advisors in Sierra Leone at the moment, and my delegation would like to know what plans the Secretariat has to deploy civilian police to Sierra Leone.

Mr. Al-Dosari (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset allow me to express our thanks to Mr. Bernard Miyet for his valuable briefing on the most recent developments in Sierra Leone.

My delegation welcomes the progress made thus far in implementation of the Lomé Agreement by the return of the leaders of the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUF) and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), the two main militias in Sierra Leone, as well as the establishment of the Government of National Unity, the registration of RUF as a political party and the noticeable increase in the number of ex-combatants registered with the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme.

Commitment to the ceasefire is the cornerstone of success of the peace process and national reconciliation in Sierra Leone. Therefore, my delegation would like to reaffirm the need for the international community to focus on the disarmament aspect. My delegation wishes to thank the Government of the United Kingdom and the World Bank for their support for the DDR programme. We call upon the donor countries and other international organizations to provide the necessary support for this programme in particular and for the peace process in Sierra Leone in general.

Despite the efforts mentioned, the political and military situation in Sierra Leone continues to be

unstable. This continued instability will have negative effects on the general security situation in the rest of the country. In order to contain the security situation, we affirm the importance of the speedy deployment of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) observers.

My delegation expresses its concern at the continued acts of kidnapping, rape and plunder, in particular in the eastern part of the country. Mr. Bockarie is currently shirking his obligation and commitment to the Lomé Agreement and is casting doubt on its credibility. RUF leaders shoulder the primary responsibility for containing Mr. Bockarie, and we call upon them to make every effort to convince him to accept the peaceful option for the solution of the crisis in Sierra Leone.

My delegation condemns all acts of violence and all crimes perpetrated against unarmed civilians and humanitarian workers, the latest of which was the kidnapping of two doctors from a non-governmental organization. We call on the parties responsible for their kidnapping to release them as soon as possible. What the country currently needs urgently is a steady flow of humanitarian assistance and havens and refuge for thousands of refugees and displaced persons.

As you know, Mr. President, on more than one occasion during our informal consultations, my delegation raised the question of the need of the international community to support the activities carried out by the International Committee of the Red Cross concerning the manufacturing of artificial limbs to rehabilitate war victims whose limbs have been amputated, in order to reintegrate them into society. My delegation had hoped that a centre for rehabilitation and the manufacture of artificial limbs would be established in Sierra Leone. It is our hope today that the Secretariat will seriously consider this proposal.

In conclusion, my delegation calls upon all parties to the Lomé Agreement to commit themselves to the spirit and the letter of the Agreement and to put the interest of their countries above all other narrow, personal interests and considerations in order to develop the country at all levels — political, economic and social — and in order for Sierra Leone to return to the fold of the international community, where it was before. On this occasion, and on behalf of my delegation, I express our thanks and appreciation to the Economic Community of West African States and its Monitoring Group, ECOMOG, for their efforts and the great sacrifices they made to help Sierra Leone return to normalcy.

I also express our thanks and appreciation to the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Francis Okelo, and the UNAMSIL troops. I wish Mr. Adeniji all success in his work as the successor to Mr. Okelo.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): My delegation would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open briefing today on the situation in Sierra Leone. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his first report on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and Under-Secretary-General Bernard Miyet for introducing the report and for his oral update of the situation.

While noting some positive developments in the situation on the ground thus far, my delegation continues to be seriously concerned about the reports of recent violations of the ceasefire Agreement and rebel attacks on civilians, involving rape, abduction and harassment, in addition to looting and destruction of property. All these acts should be strongly deplored.

We call on the parties not to allow the peace momentum to slide. Sierra Leone cannot afford a return to the anarchic situation of the past. We strongly call on both the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) to honour commitments entered into under the Peace Agreement. We also call on them to release all abductees without delay — adults and, especially, children. We also strongly deplore the detention or abduction of two doctors working for Médecins sans Frontières, and call on the RUF to effect their immediate release.

You may wish, Mr. President, to include this in any statement that you may wish to make to the press following the adjournment of this meeting.

My delegation welcomes the arrival of the first contingents of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) in the country in support of the peace process. We further welcome the appointment of Major-General Vijay Kumar Jetley of India as Force Commander of UNAMSIL. We also believe that UNAMSIL's early deployment is crucial in order to help restore calm and order in the country. We urge both UNAMSIL and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to ensure peace and security on the basis of their respective mandates.

My delegation attaches the highest importance to the successful implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme. We note that the programme had kicked off to a relatively slow start, but has now improved somewhat. However, the process has been too slow, and therefore disappointing. The number of ex-combatants turning up at the sites is well below the 45,000 estimated total in the country.

We note with concern that recent disturbances in the Lungi and Port Loko areas were due to a misunderstanding over the issue of financial assistance to the ex-combatants. We hope there will be no recurrence of this kind of incident, which can only undermine the DDR programme.

We call on the rebel leaders to rein in their supporters and ensure that the ex-combatants surrender their weapons and participate fully in the DDR programme. The DDR programme is the most critical element in this process, during this still early and very fragile peace that we have in Sierra Leone.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to welcome the Secretary-General's recent appointment of Mr. Oluyemi Adeniji of Nigeria to replace his outgoing Special Representative, Mr. Francis Okelo. We wish him every success. We also join others in paying special tribute to Mr. Okelo for his leadership, commitment and tireless efforts to secure peace in Sierra Leone, which culminated in the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement last July.

Mr. Benedejčič (Slovenia): In November, members of the Security Council twice expressed their concern about a volatile security situation in Sierra Leone. In all the statements to the press by the President of the Security Council, members of the Council noted the violations of the Lomé Peace Agreement and the consequent humanitarian suffering of the people of Sierra Leone.

The disquieting nature of the Secretary-General's first report on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) is therefore not surprising. It is clear that, despite some progress on the ground, the military and human rights situation in Sierra Leone has deteriorated markedly in recent weeks.

Slovenia is especially disturbed by the escalation of attacks on civilians by former rebel elements. According to paragraph 20 of the Secretary-General's report, these attacks have involved rape, abduction, harassment and looting. Such behaviour by former rebel elements is unacceptable. Many compromises were necessary to sign the peace accords in Lomé; one was the blanket amnesty provision for war crimes, which is, of course, difficult to reconcile with the goal of ending the culture of impunity. It is therefore imperative that the former rebel leaders, especially Mr. Foday Sankoh, prevent any further excesses on the part of their followers and ensure that all the provisions of the Lomé Peace Agreement are respected in full.

In the concluding part of his briefing, the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Bernard Miyet, emphasized that, despite all the difficulties, there was reason for cautious optimism about the peace process in Sierra Leone. The Government of National Unity has been established. The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) has provisionally registered itself as a political party. And recently there has been an increase in the number of ex-combatants registering for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme.

Moreover, the first elements of the United Nations peacekeeping force are already on the ground. It is therefore to be hoped that the current period does indeed represent a critical watershed in the peace process that will usher Sierra Leone into a period of reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation.

The last thing that Sierra Leone needs at this juncture is a repeat of the events of December last year, when the rebel forces launched an offensive and plunged the country into chaos. Members of the Security Council received advance warning of that oncoming catastrophe during an open briefing by Ambassador Hans Dahlgren of Sweden on his visit to the country as the Chairman of the Sierra Leone sanctions committee.

Let us hope that this time around the open briefing of the members of the Security Council will be followed by a peace offensive, by renewed efforts of the international community and key actors on the ground to ensure the successful completion of the peace process in Sierra Leone.

Mrs. Ashipala-Musavyi (Namibia): We, too, would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report, and we appreciate the additional information presented by Mr. Miyet.

Since the signing of the Lomé Agreement, human rights violations by rebel groups continue to characterize the political landscape of Sierra Leone. Recent fighting

between rebel wings continues to cause mass displacement of the civilian population, in suspension of the much needed humanitarian assistance to those in need. While I am on this point, let me join those who have called for the immediate release of the two doctors who were abducted.

We welcome the arrival back in Freetown of Mr. Sankoh and Mr. Koroma. We are also pleased to hear that the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) has transformed itself into a political party and that it is registering itself with the Interim National Electoral Commission. While all these steps are positive, we are deeply concerned by the military and security situation on the ground and the slow process of disarmament and demobilization.

On this respect, we would like to make it very clear that we hold the rebels responsible for the current security situation in that country. The RUF and other rebel movements cannot be political parties and rebel movements at the same time. Secondly, from what we know, soldiers by the very nature of the military set-up have no choice but to listen to their leaders. We demand that those who command and control the combatants in Sierra Leone take the necessary steps for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme to proceed unhindered. The people of Sierra Leone have seen too much suffering.

Reluctance to disarm in the confrontation between the RUF and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) harm the peace process.

The DDR programme will not succeed when abductions, looting and refusal to release abductees and child soldiers persist. These negative developments will only be addressed by sticking to the Lomé Agreement in its entirety.

We are pleased to see that the deployment of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) has started, and we call for the speedy deployment of the 6,000 UNAMSIL contingent. Even when the 6,000 UNAMSIL contingent is fully deployed, what we see in the report and what we hear is taking place on the ground make us wonder whether it can indeed deal with over 40,000 combatants. In this connection, we recall a provision in the Secretary-General's report when he proposed the 6,000 troops that their strength should be reviewed in line with conditions on the ground. We would like to understand that that provision still exists.

My delegation would like to thank the donor community for its generous contributions to the DDR programme as well as to the reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts in Sierra Leone. It is our hope that, with the political will of the people of Sierra Leone, peace will finally be achieved.

We appreciate the efforts by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to maintain security in insecure conditions. We echo the Secretary-General's call to the international community to assist ECOMOG in this regard.

The Lomé Agreement is being put to the test, but in our view so is the determination of the international community.

Finally, we thank Mr. Okelo for all that he has done in aiding the peace process, and we welcome Mr. Adeniji of Nigeria in his new appointment.

Ms. Soderberg (United States of America): We are especially pleased that today's session is in an open forum, and commend you, Mr. President, for the initiative, which demonstrates the commitment not only of the Security Council, but also of the broader international community, to assist the people of Sierra Leone to achieve the peace that they so richly deserve.

The United Nations has taken a number of important steps to assist in the peace process in Sierra Leone. We appreciate Under-Secretary-General Miyet's briefing on those efforts this morning and commend the endeavours of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone to consolidate the peace process on the ground. The recent deployment of the Kenyan and Indian troops is most welcome.

We also welcome the appointment by the Secretary-General of Ambassador Adeniji as the new Special Representative. We worked closely with him in the Central African Republic and are confident he will do an excellent job in Sierra Leone and continue the very able efforts of his predecessor, Francis Okelo.

The role of the United Nations in monitoring the ceasefire and assisting in the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme is crucial to the success of the peace process, so we are pleased that things are under way in Sierra Leone.

It is also important to finalize the arrangements to "re-hat" up to four battalions of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) troops mostly from Ghana and Nigeria, who will be a key element in the United Nations force. It is also important to commend the very courageous and able efforts of the ECOMOG troops in what is one of the most difficult areas of the world. They have performed ably in extremely difficult circumstances. Overall, one must say that the United Nations is doing its part, but it is important to remember that United Nations troops cannot impose peace in Sierra Leone or, for that matter, anywhere else. It is up to the parties to uphold the peace process by complying with the terms of the Lomé Agreement.

Some progress has been made on that. Certainly the formation of the Government of National Unity, including the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUF) and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) representatives, announced on 20 October, is an important and crucial step forward in that process. There has been some progress on the disarmament programme, albeit with a very slow start and difficulties regarding the participation of the RUF. But I think the programme is finally producing some positive results in showing the all-important progress on the ground which will help consolidate the progress.

It is crucial that the international community underscore the need for all ex-combatants to uphold their commitments under the Lomé Agreement and to disarm as soon as possible. That certainly involves the leadership of the combatants, and the role of Mr. Foday Sankoh will be crucial.

We hope that all leaders in the region will maintain pressure on Sierra Leone's factional leaders. Certainly some neighbours have direct responsibility in trying to push things forward, to move swiftly to disarm and demobilize as quickly as possible. The annual ECOWAS summit provides an opportunity for the leaders in the region to underscore that message.

It is important for all parties to cease hostilities and guarantee safe, free and unhindered access to the United Nations and international personnel in all parts of Sierra Leone. The report of the abduction of several doctors from Médecins sans Frontières this morning is deeply troubling. We join in the international community's call for their immediate release as well as the release of all abductees who are being held captive.

We think it is important for all States in the region to support reintegration and to provide humanitarian development assistance. The international community has a crucial role to play in consolidating the peace process.

Finally, I should like to reiterate that we — the United States and, more broadly, the international community — stand ready to help the people of Sierra Leone rebuild their shattered lives. But it is important to remember that this cannot be possible without the strong commitment of all parties to the peace process. It is their responsibility to live up to their commitments, which we can help them do, but which ultimately they must do themselves.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil): My delegation deeply appreciates your initiative in convening this open meeting, Mr. President.

I should like first to thank the Secretary-General for his report and Under-Secretary-General Bernard Miyet for his comprehensive and precise briefing on the situation in Sierra Leone.

My delegation welcomes the progress achieved so far in the implementation of the Lomé Agreement as well as the arrival of the first United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) contingents in Freetown. We congratulate the members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and other troop-contributing countries on their efforts to uphold the peace process.

Even though the situation in Sierra Leone is beginning to move in a positive direction, with the institution of the Government of National Unity and the initial deployment of the UNAMSIL, the country still faces serious difficulties in the security and humanitarian fields.

The first report on UNAMSIL clearly indicates that the overall situation remains very fragile. The continued actions by the rebel groups, jeopardizing the implementation of the Lomé Agreement, are unacceptable. We condemn the continued detention of women and children by the rebel groups and the recent wave of violence against the civilian population and humanitarian personnel. We join our colleagues in demanding the immediate release of the two members of Médecins sans Frontières. We also deplore the increase in ceasefire violations which may lead to the resumption of civil war. So there is an urgent need for concerted

action to remove all obstacles to the implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement. However, international efforts to promote peace in Sierra Leone cannot replace the efforts of the Sierra Leonean parties themselves to promote national reconciliation.

Since most parties are now represented in the Government of National Unity under a power-sharing agreement, priority should be given to ensure that all parties abide by the letter and the spirit of the Lomé Peace Agreement. Radical groups must be persuaded that dialogue is the only viable option. They must be warned that the international community remains determined to prevent the country from plunging again into chaos and anarchy, as well as to adopt measures against those individuals who refuse to join the peace process.

Implementation of the peace process requires adequate resources to be carried out. As a first priority, the programme of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants is essential. In this respect, we commend the Governments of the United Kingdom, Canada, Norway, Germany and Italy for their contribution to the DDR programme.

We urge strict compliance with the provisions of the existing arms embargo on Sierra Leone, and we support further measures such as the establishment of a monitoring and inspection mechanism to strengthen the effectiveness of the sanctions regime.

The Secretary-General's report calls attention to the fact that humanitarian assistance cannot be provided in many areas of Sierra Leone due to the precarious security situation. It is imperative that safe access for humanitarian personnel be guaranteed so as to meet the needs of the entire affected population.

There are also long-term tasks that the international community will have to address in the future, such as the rehabilitation and the reconstruction of the country and the need to assist with the return and reintegration of an estimated half a million Sierra Leoneans who have sought refuge in neighbouring countries. At this critical moment in the peace process, it is essential that the international community continue to provide financial and logistical support for the effective implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement.

Finally, we welcome the designation of Ambassador Adeniji of Nigeria as the new Special Representative in Sierra Leone and would like to express our deep appreciation to his predecessor, Francis Okelo.

Mr. Qin Huasun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report, as well as for the additional briefing given by the Secretariat. We also wish to express our appreciation to the delegation of the United Kingdom for convening this meeting on the question of Sierra Leone.

The situation in Sierra Leone has recently been developing in a positive direction. Mr. Sankoh and Mr. Koroma have both returned to Freetown. A new national Government has been established in Sierra Leone that includes the former rebel forces. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme has also made some headway. In general, the Lomé Agreement has been implemented. We are satisfied about this.

We wish to thank the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), as well as all other parties, for their positive efforts and their outstanding contributions to the peace process in Sierra Leone over a long time.

We are also fully aware of the fact that the present political and security situation in Sierra Leone is still fragile. There is still tension between the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). Various unstable elements could affect the peace process in Sierra Leone at any time. Furthermore, the humanitarian situation in the country is still grave and violations of human rights occur from time to time. Therefore the future of Sierra Leone allows no optimism.

The implementation of the DDR programme is vital to the peace process in Sierra Leone. In this regard, we have taken note of paragraphs 13 and 14 of the report of the Secretary-General. We are surprised by the speech given by Mr. Sankoh in which he said that the RUF might temporarily suspend its participation in the DDR programme. We are also concerned that part of the RUF's troops have all along refused to take part in the programme. We hope that the RUF will take part in the programme with a more positive attitude. We urge Mr. Sankoh to play his role.

At the same time, we have also taken note of the fact that due to lack of resources and poor treatment, there are incidents of unrest at some demobilization

centres. We call upon the international community to further increase its assistance to Sierra Leone so as to facilitate the smooth implementation of the DDR programme.

We note that the Government of Sierra Leone was supposed to have completed the implementation of the DDR programme throughout the country by 15 December. In the light of the current process, it is almost certain that this date will be postponed. However, it is our sincere hope that it will not be postponed repeatedly.

We have taken note with satisfaction of the fact that the deployment of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) has already begun and that the first contingent of troops is already in place.

The work of formulating a national development security strategy framework is also close to completion. We wish to express our appreciation to the Secretariat for its efforts in this regard.

At the same time, I would also like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Ambassador Okelo for his work. We also hope that the new Special Representative, Ambassador Adeniji, will be able to complete this arduous task.

In conclusion, we call upon the international community to continue its joint efforts to help the people of Sierra Leone achieve peace, stability and, eventually, national reconciliation.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United Kingdom.

We too are very grateful to Under-Secretary-General Miyet for his very helpful update on the Secretary-General's latest report.

Progress continues to be made, and we welcome in particular the continuing strong contribution of Nigeria and of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) as a whole, and the arrival of Kenyan and Indian peacekeepers under the new Force Commander, Major-General Jetley. It is critical that the force deploys to full strength and soon as possible, and we must ensure that the Force Commander has the clearest possible guidance and backing from his headquarters in New York.

The United Kingdom is committed to do all that we can to help in this effort and to make the Lomé Peace Agreement work more widely. The Agreement gives the best chance to the people of Sierra Leone for an end to the violence and suffering they have endured for the past eight years. While there are, as Mr. Miyet has pointed out, some reasons for cautious optimism — particularly in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme — we agree with the Secretary-General that serious problems remain.

We are concerned at the continuing cease-fire violations, human rights abuses and lack of humanitarian access. And we are appalled by the recent attack on personnel of non-governmental organizations and by the detention of medical workers in the east of the country. We hope that their release is imminent.

Tensions between the different rebel groups and leaders — Sankoh, Koroma and Bockarie — lie behind much of this continuing unrest and violence. It is essential to maintain dialogue with each of them to bring them and their followers into the Lomé framework.

Even in the area of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, organizational and security problems continue to hamper the DDR programme. These need to be addressed, and a better information and sensitization strategy is vital to encourage those groups that have not yet disarmed to do so.

The United Kingdom welcomes the recent pledges of contributions to the World Bank Trust Fund from Germany, Canada, Italy and Norway and the announcement this morning of contributions from the Netherlands and France.

We look forward to hearing the Secretary-General's next report in January, when UNAMSIL is fully deployed. The United Kingdom welcomes the appointment of Special Representative Adeniji and pays tribute to the work of Francis Okelo.

Finally, we urge the parties and all those with influence over them to continue to ensure the implementation of the provisions of the Lomé Agreement to allow this desperately needed peacekeeping operation to fulfil its mandate.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to Mr. Miyet to respond to the comments and questions that have arisen.

Mr. Miyet (*spoke in French*): First of all, and I regret that I did not do the same earlier, several delegations have expressed their satisfaction with, and gratitude for, the work done by Francis Okelo during the difficult phase that led to the Lomé Agreement. Subsequently he proved to be a key player for the United Nations and demonstrated wisdom, intelligence and tact in carrying out his role.

By the same token, Special Representative Adeniji has, under very trying circumstances, already proved — through his experience, his authority and his ability to manage a difficult operation in the Central African Republic — that in the months ahead he will be up to the challenge posed by the process. I think that the expressions of gratitude are well-deserved and that there are now grounds for real hope that Ambassador Adeniji is someone who will be able to successfully take over.

(*spoke in English*)

Maybe, for Mr. van Walsum's benefit, I should say that perhaps I was influenced with respect to the bad news and the good news, but considering the way the English speakers expressed themselves — Ambassador Jagne himself said at one point "*au revers de la médaille*" — I believe that maybe with these good English words I was drawn into another language. Or maybe it was the French delegation which, by posing questions that raised a lot of doubts and uncertainties, influenced my presentation. But I will see.

With respect to the French presentations, I would like to apologize to the French-speaking delegations for the fact that there is a small error in the French version of the report, in paragraph 6, where reference is made to the "American national electoral Commission". Perhaps the translator was influenced by the fact that Ambassador Holbrooke was there; his reputation is such that maybe he is also chairing this Commission.

I will now turn to the various questions raised. With respect to Ambassador Fowler's question on mines, it is true that we have recently discovered that there is a mine problem. We did not know of it before because we were not able to reach the northern part of the country. It is clear that we do not know the scope of the problem at this juncture. We will send a technical assessment team very soon to review with the Government and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) what the demining needs are, both to protect the United Nations troops to be deployed there and to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance and the work of the humanitarian non-governmental organizations.

The second question was raised by Ambassador Jagne on the possibility of deploying civilian police. Here too I would say that every mission is different and that the concept of operations has to be adapted to specific needs. Mainly, as far as we are concerned, it is under the Lomé Peace Agreement that we are carrying out our activities and actions. So with respect to the ceasefire and as far as the civilian police is concerned, actions are already being carried out with the support of the British Commonwealth. This task was not directly given to the United Nations, but we are assisting and supporting this process and will continue to do so.

Our human rights component is also working very hard to try to assist the process. One hundred Sierra Leonean police officers were trained this week by our human rights experts, and these programmes will develop later on.

The representative of Namibia also posed some questions as to the references by the Secretariat to the fact that the strength of the troops will be reviewed, depending on the conditions on the ground. This is linked mainly to the fact that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) troops would remain. This is referred to in the report of the Secretary-General and was mentioned in my briefing at the outset of this meeting. We expect the ECOMOG troops to remain with a robust presence in both Freetown and Lungi. There is no need to increase the United Nations troops. The reference in the report was linked to the level of cooperation with ECOMOG and to the actions that they could take in this region. Therefore, for the time being, the conditions are there.

(*spoke in French*)

I will strive now to answer the questions raised by the French delegation, to inject some optimism and to show that to speak in French does not necessarily entail pessimism.

First, let me touch on the question on the deployment in the northern part of Sierra Leone and the conditions under which it will take place, in particular the security conditions. As has been made clear, the deployment in the north will consist of two Kenyan and

Indian contingents. That is due in part to the desire of the Organization and the Secretariat to show clearly that the United Nations action is a new and impartial action, and also to show our resolve that United Nations action in this connection must be vigorous.

This information has been communicated to all the parties, including Foday Sankoh, Sam Bockarie and Johnny Paul Karoma. Discussions are ongoing to ensure that every clarification will be made as to the deployment — how and when it will be carried out, under what conditions and with what mandate. We believe that in this way problems can be avoided.

It is clear that the deployment of these troops will give rise to questions and concerns. It is taking place in a measured and well-thought-out manner in order to ensure security.

The second series of questions relates to the fact that there are some doubts as to the commitment of the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUF) to participate in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, and as to the possible explanations. Is it an attempt to raise the stakes? Are there disagreements between the various rebel leaders? Or is it simply a refusal to implement the Agreement or a desire to retain their hold over diamond-rich areas? It is very difficult at this point to give a clear-cut answer.

I will say, though, as Ambassador Qin Huasun stated, that even if recently there has been some doubt about the implementation of the programme, we know that Foday Sankoh and Johnny Paul Koroma are in Freetown, that they are actively participating in all the negotiations and that on several occasions they have made statements. It is clear that, if they had deliberately wished not to implement it, for their own safety and security they would doubtless prefer not to be in Freetown at this stage. That is one element that should be taken into account.

The second part of my answer is perhaps linked to the fact that now United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) troops are in the process of being deployed. That presence — and the arrival of Indian and Kenyan troops with strong resources — in areas that have been only under rebel control throughout the entire period, might give rise to certain questions. As I said earlier, there is a need for dialogue and clarification so as to create conditions of confidence with regard to all the rebel leaders. Let us not forget that they have been isolated for months, even years, by combat and distrust. The sudden arrival of well-equipped foreign troops will doubtless give rise here and there to fears and questions that should be taken into account.

Given the climate of distrust now prevailing, a further element that might give rise to such doubts and disquiet at this stage is the disarmament programme. We must make sure that it progresses in parallel, on the rebel side as well as that of the other forces — that is to say, the Civil Defence Forces (CDF) as well as the Kamajors. It is necessary to show that this disarmament programme involves all the parties, not only the rebel groups.

A third explanation for the doubts and questions may also relate to the disarmament programme, in particular the conditions under which the fighters that have agreed to demobilize are received in the camps and the payment of a sum to enable them to provide for the survival of their families. These factors have created certain dissatisfaction and anxiety in the camps and led to expressions of discontent that are perhaps understandable. Obviously, both Foday Sankoh and Johnny Paul Koroma are subject to pressures from their former troops, who want to see a real will to demobilize and tangible signs that their reintegration will provide them with adequate financial conditions and dignity. Such reactions affect the leaders, who are held to account by the troops.

Under such conditions it is important for dialogue to continue, as is happening, and for the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to maintain a consolidated, firm and assured presence in both Freetown and Lungi. In that context, and given the financial and human effort being made by the countries that have been contributing to ECOMOG, the support of donor countries is essential. I made that point earlier, and I hope that it will be borne in mind. It is essential to support this effort.

At the same time, the presence of UNAMSIL, as well as of Indian and Kenyan troops and the ECOMOG troops that will remain or be replaced by fresh troops, will no doubt have an impact on the rebels themselves and on the various groups, showing them that the exercise is to be taken seriously, and that the force present in the country has the capacity to deter the various parties from reneging on the commitments they have undertaken.

In conclusion, inasmuch as this is a public meeting and will no doubt resonate in the country as a

demonstration of widespread support among African countries and throughout the international community, I believe that the Security Council is sending out an important message to all the parties.

In its last question, the French delegation referred to the statements made by Mr. Johnny Paul Koroma regarding the organization of the work of the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace and asked whether the issue had been discussed with the United Nations. I should like to remind the Council that the Commission is a national one, created under the Agreement. We are not talking about a Commission that is under the responsibility of the United Nations Mission. It is therefore essentially for the Sierra Leoneans themselves to organize and discuss it. The only comment that I can make is that Mr. Koroma's statement related to the strategy he envisaged for the Commission. In our view, that is a demonstration, at least at this stage, of his commitment to working actively within the institutions that have been set up under the Lomé Agreement. This is therefore a positive sign. The statements that he made appear to be relatively pertinent. It is now up to the members of that Commission themselves to hold discussions and to establish their guidelines, programme of work and strategy.

The President: I am grateful to Mr. Miyet for his answers and observations, which were, as always, comprehensive and acute. This has been an important and interesting meeting on the subject. This is a critical operation of the United Nations in Africa; we must get it right, and the Security Council will want to work closely with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, in particular, in getting it right.

Mr. Buallay (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): Thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor once again in this interesting and thought-provoking discussion of the important subject of Sierra Leone. My delegation, both in the informal consultations and in the debate in this Chamber, made a proposal regarding the establishment of a centre in Sierra Leone to provide artificial limbs and rehabilitation for those who have been disabled. My delegation made that proposal because of the large number of war victims in that country. There is a need to rehabilitate and reintegrate into society those who have been maimed or disabled so that they will not be a burden on others. We made our proposal knowing that there are good centres of that type in developed countries that can help in this regard, whether directly or through the specialized agencies of the United Nations.

We hoped that the Secretariat would respond to our proposal, which would contribute to post-conflict peace-building in Sierra Leone. That task might fall within the purview of bodies other than the Security Council, at least indirectly. In our opinion, that is sufficient reason for the Secretariat to enlighten us as to which competent body we should address our proposal to. My delegation would be grateful for a response from Mr. Miyet.

The President: I give the floor to Mr. Miyet.

Mr. Miyet: I did not realize that the representative of Bahrain had asked me that question — I thought it was an observation. All efforts leading to the alleviation of the suffering of the people and to improving their plight are welcome. I think that it would be useful to discuss the matter with Carolyn McAskie, the acting Emergency Relief Coordinator, so that she can check with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Health Organization and find out which agencies are working most actively in that area and are able to support such a process. I will inform her about those project initiatives on the part of Bahrain.

The President: I thank the Under-Secretary-General for his contribution this morning.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.